

TWELFTH ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
BROOKLYN ASSOCIATION

FOR
Improving the Condition of the Poor,

For the Year 1855.

Constitution and List of Officers for 1855-6.

BROOKLYN:
I. VAN ANDEN'S STEAM PRESSES, 30 FULTON STREET.

1855.

TWELFTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

BROOKLYN ASSOCIATION

FOR

Improving the Condition of the Poor,

For the Year 1855.

Constitution and List of Officers for 1855-6.

BROOKLYN:

I. VAN ANDEN'S STEAM PRESSES, 30 FULTON STREET.

1855.

offsite

HV

88

B8

12th

(1955)

AVERY ARCHITECTURAL AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY

GIFT OF SEYMOUR B. DURST OLD YORK LIBRARY

OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION.

PRESIDENT,
STEPHEN CROWELL.

VICE PRESIDENTS,
THOMAS H. SANDFORD, | A. A. LOW,
HORACE B. CLAFLIN, | GEORGE L. WILLARD,
CHARLES P. BALDWIN.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,
ISAAC H. FROTHINGHAM, | WILLIAM H. MELLEN,
CALVIN P. SANGER, | JOHN J. STUDWELL,
WILLIAM POOLE, | JOHN T. CONKLIN,
ARTHUR W. BENSON, | IRA SMITH.
JOHN BLUNT, Treasurer. GEO. R. NOYES, Rec. Sec'y.
LUTHER EAMES, Corresponding Secretary & General Agent,
Office 88 Hicks Street.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

FIRST WARD.—Henry Rowland, John T. Martin, Aaron Healey, Samuel Daniels, John H. Leggett.

SECOND WARD.—Daniel T. Leverich, Joshua Rodgers, Jr., Wm. C. Rushmore, Daniel Tryon, David M. Hubbard.

THIRD WARD.—Thos. C. Fanning, Richard P. Buck, Andrew Wesson, Adam D. Wheelock, Reuben W. Ropes.

FOURTH WARD.—Eleazer Kingsley, F. G. Hosford, Cornelius Smith, S. B. Stewart, Wm. H. Hazard.

FIFTH WARD.—Rev. Wm. Burnett, John Avilla, Andrew Fitzgerald, Arthur Wellwood, Isaac Revere.

SIXTH WARD.—J. W. Green, David Collier, A. S. Baldwin, Rev. Samuel Bayliss, Rev. Eben Carpenter.

SEVENTH WARD.—John Rhodes, Alfred Smith, Edward Rowe, Stephen R. Frazier, Frederick Glover.

TENTH WARD.—J. Milton Smith, A. S. Van Beuren, Edward J. Jaques, Alexander Bingham, William G. Mott.

ELEVENTH WARD.—Lewis N. Baldwin, James H. Taft, Alfred S. Barnes, George Gault, Daniel S. Darling.

TWELFTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE BROOKLYN ASSOCIATION FOR IMPROVING
THE CONDITION OF THE POOR.

The Brooklyn Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, has been in existence about twelve years.

Its plan of operation was devised, and its formation completed by some of the best minds in our community.

It was the intention of the originators of this association, to improve the moral as well as physical condition of the destitute—to furnish relief from suffering, but to have charity so mingled with sympathy, immediate relief with encouragement and kindness, that hope should be inspired, effort aroused, energies stimulated, and present recipients become future donors.

These objects have from year to year in a good degree, been realized.

The Board of Managers, now at its twelfth annual meeting, congratulate the Association on its successful course through so long a term of years.

The necessity for such an organization as this, which reaches every street, lane and alley in the city, that provides for such cases of suffering as private charity overlook, and municipal provision for the poor reject, is so well established that this Association is recognized, equally, as one of the standing institutions of our city, and an honor to our citizens.

The operations of your Association for the year past, have been on a much larger scale than any previous year. The severity of the winter, the uncommon high prices of food and fuel, together with the limited demand for all kinds of labor, compelled many to seek relief through this Association that never before required assistance.

From the 20th of November, 1854, to April 1st, 1855, there was distributed one thousand and eighty tons of coal, at an aggregate cost of \$7,928. Provisions were furnished, principally in rice, meal, fish, beans and molasses.

The whole cost of provisions was \$5,100.

The articles were furnished at the following prices, viz.:—meal 3 c. per lb., rice 4 1-2 c. per lb., fish 4 c. per lb., beans 6 c. per quart, molasses 9 cents per quart.

Cases of sickness, infirmity, and peculiar necessity, were supplied occasionally with tea, sugar and bread, but these were the exceptions, and not the rule.

One hundred and eighty-eight pairs of shoes were furnished, at a cost of \$141.

Your Association also made a donation to the Soup-house Association of \$200.

Your charities were distributed to a much larger number the past season, than in any preceeding year—two thousand four hundred and fifty-seven families, comprising eleven thousand and fifty-six individuals were the recipients of your bounty—averaging about one dollar and thirty-four cents to each person assisted.

To meet this large expenditure, there was paid into the treasury by visitors, the sum of \$8,403 42.

The Board with grateful remembrance, renewedly make mention of the following institutions and churches that contributed as follows, viz.:

New York National Insurance Co.....	\$ 50 00
“ Board of Brokers	250 00
“ Corn Exchange	800 00
St. Peter's Church, Rev. Mr. Stearns	65 62
Church of the Pilgrims, Rev. Dr. Storrs	100 00
First Baptist Church, Rev. Mr. Briggs	130 00
Church on the Heights, Rev. Dr. Bethune.....	176 29
Church of the Holy Trinity, Rev. Dr. Lewis.....	181 55
St. Ann's, Rev. Dr. Cutler.....	296 98
Plymouth Church, Rev. H. W. Beecher.....	400 00
Brooklyn Thistle Benevolent Association.....	100 00

Early in the month of February, it was known to members of your Board, that clothing, bedding,

furniture, &c., of various worthy families had been deposited with pawn-brokers to afford the owners and their families temporary relief. It was also apparent that your Association could not continue through the month to meet the demands for food and fuel, unless prompt and liberal means were furnished. On presenting these facts to the Mayor, he issued the following call for a public meeting of our citizens :

DEAR SIR :—The condition of the poor in our city requires immediate relief. More than thirteen hundred families receive daily assistance from "The Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor," and thousands are still suffering for help, which the Association is unable to afford them. Its means are exhausted, and, in this inclement season, the poor are starving and freezing in our midst. The distress from the want of food, clothing and fuel is greater and more universal in our city than has ever been known before, and even in times of pestilence it has been scarcely more appalling than now. Help must be had immediately, or famine and want, with disease, will follow.

In view of this emergency, you are earnestly requested to attend a public meeting for the further relief of the poor, to be held in the Supreme Court Room, City Hall, on Tuesday evening, the 13th inst. at 7½ o'clock GEO. HALL, Mayor.

CITY HALL, Feb. 10th, 1855.

In answer to this call, our citizens came together in larger numbers than ever before on any like occasion, and with a liberality worthy the highest praise, contributed the sum of three thousand seven hundred and twenty-nine dollars.

This liberal and well-timed addition to the funds of the Association, enabled them to meet and provide for all cases of positive suffering, and also redeem from the pawn-broker the property of some thirty-seven families, mostly mechanics and widows.

Some three hundred second hand-garments were received and carefully distributed among the destitute. As this mode of charity lays comparatively no burden upon the contributors, and is so important and valuable to half-clad widows, decrepit age, and suffering children, your Board take this opportunity to direct public attention to this mode of relief, and solicit more general contributions of cast-off clothing than has heretofore been bestowed.

Several of our benevolent societies and individuals, have contributed comforters and new under garments, for which they will please receive the thanks of the recipients.

In the last annual report, your Board say, "the present system of distributing our means fails to work as well as could be wished. Various plans are now under consideration by the Board of Managers, and it is confidently believed that this defect in the working of our system will be remedied."

The system of distribution alluded to, and which had been in operation for several years, was one general depot for all provisions, and all applicants sent to one place.

The objections were,

1st. The expense of store rent, lighting, warming, agents and clerks to do the work.

2d. The more delicate and refined, who unfortunately required assistance, were brought in immediate contact with the coarse and rude, and thus our

charities, instead of carrying comfort and hope, carried *to them* a painful sense of degradation.

3d. That widows and children after having obtained an order from their visitor, and travelled one, sometimes two miles to the depot, were obliged to stand outside in the coldest weather, half-clad as they were, sometimes for two hours, waiting their turn to be helped, as the depot could accommodate but some 15 or 20 persons at once, while frequently there would be a larger number standing outside.

The plan adopted in its place was, to contract with large dealers for whatever amount might be wanted more or less, appoint a grocer in each ward who would be furnished with the articles at cost, allow him a small advance for his trouble and expense. Visitors in each ward drawing their orders on him. The result has been entirely satisfactory, the Board are confident that a considerable saving is realized on actual cost, while the mode of distribution is by far the best, as by it each recipient is furnished without delay or loss of time, and the exact amount of the order promptly delivered.

It is with much satisfaction the Board mention that no instance of injustice either in quantity or quality came to their knowledge through the entire winter. They commend the system to their successors.

In every city, large as Brooklyn now is, charities are always wanted, and the poor will always be there. But when that city, like Brooklyn and New

York, stands at the gate-way of incoming emigration, and has a constant current of the poor of all nations poured into it, it must expect endless calls for relief for the suffering. Our citizens have thus far, met these demands cheerfully, and while it is noble and Christian to furnish relief promptly and freely, your Board have for a long time felt that, for many of your recipients, there might be furnished something even better than provisions or money, and that better thing is *work*.

The great want of our poor, is employment ; give them that, and three-fourths of your charities may remain in your pockets ; give them work, and you allow them to maintain their independence ; you inspire hope, quicken ambition, and stimulate dormant energies ; you carry encouragement to many who now are discouraged, and from many a heart you drive despair.

In the hope that some plan may be devised to accomplish so desirable a result, your Board recommend the appointment of a Committee who will take this whole subject under advisement and report at some future meeting.

Meanwhile, let not your Association relax any effort to relieve suffering, to comfort the unfortunate, to sympathize with sorrow, and raise up him that has fallen.

In seasons of uncommon distress and suffering, soup-house associations and local organizations have their office and benefit, and are cordially welcomed

into the family of benevolence; but in seasons of only ordinary pressure, when an organization exists that reaches every family, both for distribution and collection, it is better, in the judgment of your Board, that *one* association only should be the almoner of public charity.

Every additional Society creates some conflicting interest, besides giving the impostor and slothful, a better chance to live on your contributions.

The coming winter, it is hoped, will bear with less severity on the poor than did the last.

Fuel is not so expensive, some kinds of provision are less, while the prices of other kinds rule higher.

The number of those without employment, will be less; labor will, perhaps, be a little better paid, but of the two thousand four hundred and fifty-seven families assisted last year by your benevolence, how many will get through the coming winter without help? Some of them will; others have left the city. Not a few of the old recipients, together with some new ones, will require assistance; therefore, it must be expected that cases of real suffering will be numerous.

The Board of Managers, in conclusion, return the Association their unfeigned thanks for the yearly evidence, by your donations, that the poor are neither forgotten or rejected.

Your liberal contributions are solicited for the coming year, that your Board may thus have the means, as heretofore, to cheer the heart of the

widow—to say to the hungry, here is bread—to the naked, here is clothing—to the freezing, here is fuel. Then will your visitors rejoice in the work to which they are set, and pointing to the members of your association, proudly say to every poor unfortunate, “these are your friends.”

“ Give alms—the needy sink with pain—
The orphans mourn, the crushed complain.
Give freely—hoarded gold is curst
A prey to robbers, and to rust.”

“ Go gladly, with true sympathy,
Where want's pale victims pine.
And bid life's sweetest smiles again
Along their pathway shine.”

J. MILTON SMITH, THOS. C. FANNING, A. W. BENSON, LUTHER EAMES,	}	COMMITTEE.
---	---	------------

TREASURER'S ACCOUNTS.

The undersigned, a Committee appointed by the Board of Managers to examine and audit the accounts of the receipts and expenditures of the Association for the past season, have attended to the duty assigned them, and beg leave to report as follows :

Balance on hand October 9th, 1854,.....	\$74 56
Collections received to October 9th, 1855,....	14,724 94
	<hr/>
	\$14,799 50
Amount paid as per vouchers,.....	14,713 34
	<hr/>
Leaving a balance now in the Treasury of...	\$86 16

And your Committee certify the same to be correct.

J. T. DAVENPORT, }
JOHN J. STUDWELL, } COMMITTEE.

APPLICANTS FOR AID.

Of the applicants for aid, it may be supposed that many are reluctantly, yet necessarily rejected. It is the design of the Association to aid all for whom no other provision is made. Were it the purpose to relieve all, irrespective of such a provision, then other charities would be superseded, the alms-house might be demolished, and every other form of alms-giving, public, private and associate, cease. But this being, for obvious reasons, neither desirable nor practicable, it is important that the action of the organization in this particular should be clearly understood.

In the list of exceptions may be included,

First, Incurable mendicants, the willfully improvident, the indolent who will not work, and the intemperate, on whom neither counsel, nor kindness, nor alms, after faithful trial, have availed to recover from their wicked, wasteful and ruinous course. Such being referred to public relief, are left to learn wisdom in the school of experience; for they will learn in no other. In regard to such, there is a command from God, "If a man will not work, neither shall he eat."

Second, All persons who have relatives able and willing to relieve them—for it would not be right to interfere with those reciprocal claims and obligations founded in affinity, which have both a divine and humane sanction.

Third, All who have become so pauperized in spirit by long-continued vagrancy, or other causes, that there is no hope of inciting them to self-support, and to aid whom would foster a great social evil.

Fourth, All that have legitimate claims on other sources of relief, which can be used for their benefit; for it is not the design of the Institution to supersede existing available charities.

Fifth, All persons who from any cause are likely to be entirely and permanently dependent on charity; because if these should be relieved, the entire funds of the Association would soon be exhausted in the support of a permanent list, and its primary objects—the elevation of the moral and physical condition of the poor—be defeated. Such persons should become an in-door public charge, which is far preferable to dependence on incidental relief.

Sixth, All recent emigrants who have claims on the Emigration Department; because the said department is obligated by law to care for such persons, if needy, for five years after their arrival, and are provided with means for this purpose. Consequently every dollar expended on such by the Association, would be an improper appropriation of so much of

its funds, which have been intrusted to it for other objects.

By refusing aid to the foregoing description of persons, none are necessarily left to suffer. Even those who obstinately persist in their vicious courses, have a resource in Alms House relief. The Association in making these exceptions, is governed by such humane and economical considerations, as have important moral and social bearings, both on the individuals concerned and the public. To be less discriminating and rigid, would in many instances violate the Divine law; the Institution would become the enemy rather than the friend of humanity, and produce mischiefs that would counterbalance its benefits.

APPLICANTS RELIEVED.

After so thorough a sifting, let it not be supposed that but few entitled to aid remain. Far from this is the fact. The persons aided consist chiefly,

First, Of indigent widows and deserted wives with young children—a very numerous class—who, in struggling to support and properly train their families, are often overtaken by want, and as often assisted and also counselled in the management of their affairs, with the rational expectation that such attentions and aid might not only save them from degradation and vice, but prove the means eventually of introducing them into society as self-dependent, industrious and useful citizens.

Second, Of educated and even accomplished females, who have been reduced from comfortable circumstances to dependence, and who are now without the ability of earning their subsistence. They, unfortunately, answer to the description of those who “cannot dig, and to beg are ashamed.” Many of them have been mentally and morally cultivated, but are physically feeble, because too delicately reared; and being uninstructed in any

useful art or employment, have neither strength nor skill to engage in remunerative occupations. They are, in short, the victims of a mistaken education, and by a life of humiliation and want are suffering the severe penalties of parental pride and folly. The relief of this class is often accompanied by such efforts as result in interesting respectable families in their behalf, whose sympathies and assistance are better suited to meet their peculiar wants than organized charity.

Third, Females once in comfortable circumstances, who have been reduced to poverty by the death or misfortunes of their husbands and relatives, or by other cause. Widows of tradesmen or mechanics, having children, and perhaps, aged fathers and mothers depending upon them for support. These are mostly American born, and generally deserving of commiseration and aid.

Fourth, The sick and bereaved generally, who by their misfortunes have been brought to temporary want. This class is very numerous, and has drawn largely on the sympathy and assistance of the Association. Sickness and death being unutterable sorrow where they enter, whether it be into the hovels of the poor or the mansions of the opulent. But these afflictions are sadly aggravated by poverty, where there are none to pity or to succor.

Fifth, Those who have been accustomed to provide their own support, and prefer self-dependence

to reliance on alms ; but being reduced to want by unavoidable causes may require temporary aid.

Sixth, Recent emigrants and those having claims on other charities, but who, having been referred to their proper sources of relief, on failing to receive aid, have fallen back on this Institution. The Visitors, pitying their extreme destitution, often give what is designed for temporary relief. In this way large numbers have been aided by us who do not belong to us. The effect of giving to this last class is generally injurious. The Emigration establishment, the Alms House Department and others, finding that the cases neglected by them are cared for by this Association, one strong incentive to fidelity on their part is removed, and they are encouraged to throw upon this charity, so far as it is willing to bear it, the support of all the out-door poor in the city.

NOTE.

THE BOARD OF MANAGERS trust that contributors to the funds of this Association will see, and concur in the propriety of leaving it to the official Visitor to determine, who are and who are not proper recipients of these charities.

CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE I.

This Institution shall be called *The Brooklyn Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor*.

ARTICLE II.

The design is in general, the elevation of the moral and physical condition of the indigent; and as far as compatible with these objects, the relief of their necessities.

ARTICLE III.

Every person who becomes an annual subscriber or visitor, shall be a member of the Association.

ARTICLE IV.

The affairs of the Association shall be managed by a President, five Vice Presidents, a Treasurer, a Corresponding Secretary and General Agent, a Recording Secretary, the elected members of the Executive Committee, and the members of the several Advisory Committees, who shall constitute a Board of Managers.

ARTICLE V.

There shall be an Executive Committee, to consist of the President, Vice Presidents, Recording Secretary, the Chairman of each Advisory Committee, and seven elected members, on whom shall devolve all the business of the Association, during the recess of the Board of Managers.

ARTICLE VI.

The annual meeting of the Association shall be held in the month of October, when the report of the proceedings of the Board of Managers for the past year shall be submitted, and the Officers and Managers for the ensuing year shall be elected.

ARTICLE VII.

The Board of Managers shall have authority to make By-Laws, to fill vacancies that may occur,

appoint Committees, and generally to exercise a control over the funds and operations of the Association.

ARTICLE VIII.

An office shall be opened in an eligible situation for the purpose of concentrating and diffusing all information pertaining to the operations and objects of the Association, and for the transaction of its general business.

ARTICLE IX.

The city shall be divided into nine districts, the first five Wards constituting each a district, and the Sixth and Seventh Wards each two districts. The first district of the Sixth Ward, lying west of and including Court street, and the second district, east of Court street; the first district of the Seventh Ward, lying west of Clinton avenue, and the second, lying east of, and including Clinton avenue—eleven Wards, with the exception of the Eighth and Ninth, constituting each a district. Each district shall be represented in the Board of Managers by an advisory committee, to consist of five members, which committee shall subdivide their several districts into sections, appoint visitors therefor with power to fill vacancies which may occur, and exercise a general supervision over the operations in their respective districts.

ARTICLE X.

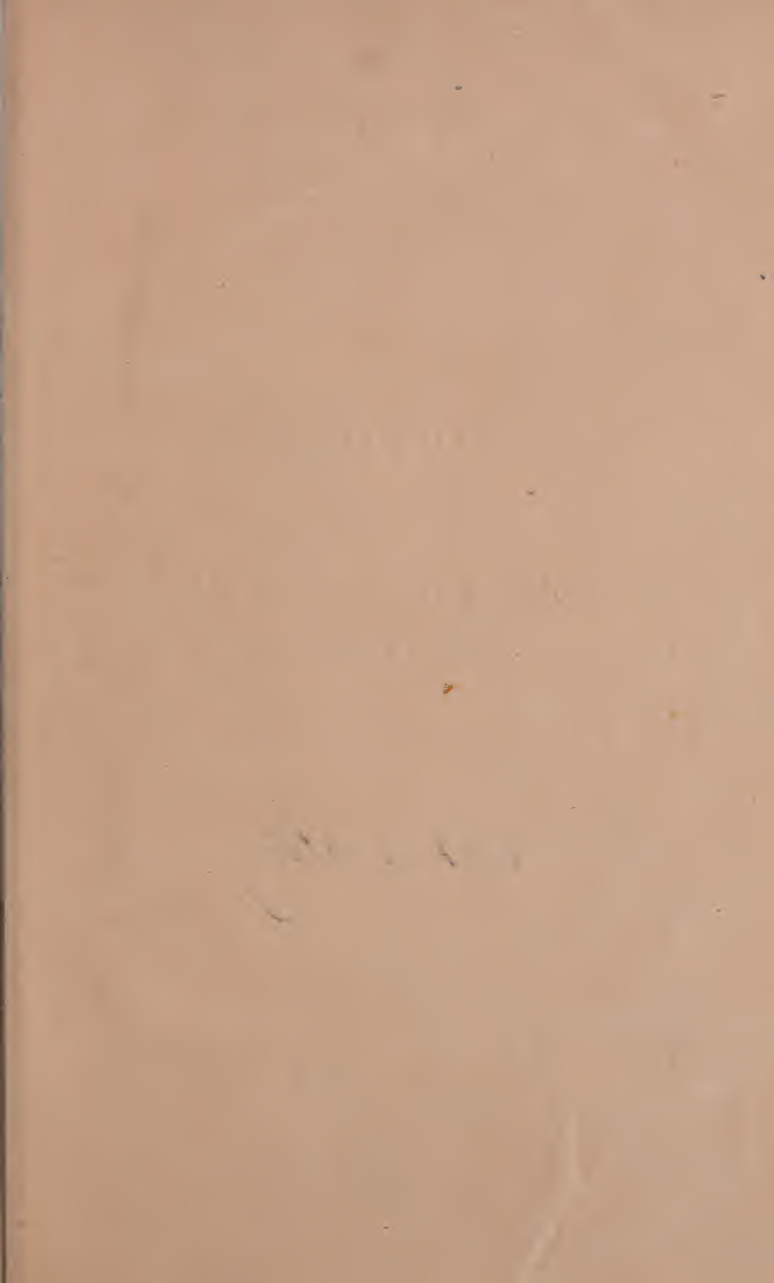
The Board of Managers shall provide printed tickets, which shall be uniformly used by the members of the Association.

ARTICLE XI.

Special meetings of the Association may be called by the Secretary under the direction of the President, or on receiving a requisition signed by five members. Two day's notice must be given of the time and place of meeting.

ARTICLE XII.

This Constitution shall not be altered except at a general meeting of the Association, and by a vote of two-thirds of the members present.



NOTICE.

The undersigned will call in a few days for your contribution to this charity.

W^m Robt R Story Visitor.